

and left her in the jug. On my return I found her still quiet but resentful of any interference. At six and half of hours from time of immersion I took her out, she was a bit languid at first but resented interference. Ten minutes later she was very fierce and active and remained so until this morning, 48 hours after having been put into the water, I chloroformed her. Research gave me the following particulars: All measurements taken as in Fauna of British India, Arachnida, by Pocock. Length in all 136 mm. Carapace 18, tail 82, brachinus 12, width of hand 17, length of moveable finger 19, length of hand posterior lobe to tip of fixed finger 30. (Pocock does not say how he measured the "under hand.") Sex female, *Palamnceus swammerdami*. Agrees with the description in Fauna of British India except that colour is a good bolster green all over legs and vesicle reddish, quinæa operculum, pectus sternum yellow (except last segment dark brown to green), pentagonæ, cephalothoracii sternum reddish, tail blackish or almost black green.

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ST. THOMAS' MOUNT, MADRAS,
24th September 1921.

No. XXVII.—SCORPION COMMITTING SUICIDE.

The following occurrence may be of some interest. It is generally supposed that scorpions if surrounded by fire or if suddenly approached by a bright light will sting themselves to death rather than suffer the agonies of burning. Romanes amongst others in "Animal Intelligence" refers to it as an unique instance of suicide amongst animals. I have frequently tried the experiment and have never succeeded in getting a scorpion to sting itself. In every instance they preferred to be burned and even walked out over the circle of fire. Others who have tried similar experiments have to my knowledge also failed to induce suicide. The story regarding suicide has therefore been largely discredited. The following occurrence would seem to prove however that on occasions scorpions undoubtedly do commit suicide. The other day my wife in moving some papers disturbed a scorpion. Not wishing to kill it and not being certain what it was she confined it in an inverted peg tumbler. I returned within the hour and on removing the tumbler to kill the scorpion found it quite dead. Moreover, the body was swollen to an inordinate size almost to bursting point being quite different in appearance when first confined. When last seen it had been attempting to crawl up the inside of the glass and invariably slipped back, but not in such a way as to make it at all probable that it could have accidentally stung itself. The manner and period of confinement were not such as to make it conceivable that an animal like a scorpion could have died of want of air. Moreover this would not account for the swollen condition of the body. The fluid which had distended the body was of a blackish grey colour giving one the impression that some chemical change in the natural fluid of the body had taken place. Taking all the circumstances into consideration the only possible conclusion seems to be that the scorpion died from poison which was self-inflicted.

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30th September 1921.